

# hummingbird of death

*Hummingbird of Death Interview by Will Butler*

With over seventy shows under their belts, well over a hundred plus recorded songs, as well as crucial releases on Give Praise, Cowabunga, 625, Sound Pollution, and To Live A Lie, HUMMINGBIRD OF DEATH springs forth out of the annals of Idaho with one mission and one mission only, to rain down blistering fastcore upon the world.

Will>> First off, would you mind giving me a rundown of the members of HUMMINGBIRD OF DEATH and how you got started as a band? Justin: Brian does sonic rhythm enhancement while I do all of the ambient/noise stuff you hear in the band. I started this band to be an outlet of otherworldly transcendentalism and paranormal invocation by capturing sub-particle auras using contemporary recording techniques...but Mike showed up and wouldn't quit playing blast beats. Mike: It became obvious early on that my vision of the band was far superior to Justin's, and now I write most of the lyrics and music, and they

go along with it for shits and gigs.

Will>> Not knowing much about your town I decided to search online to see what Boise is famous for and seriously pulled up a page that said the only thing that Boise is famous for is potatoes. Please for my sanity's sake enlighten me on some more interesting goings on in your town. Mike: Boise is also

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famous for having lots of trees ('bois' being French for 'tree'), and for the local college football team. Brian and I are avid supporters of Boise State football, even though we could do without the jock culture associated with football and most athletics in general. (Look for a song on a future release which touches on this subject.) Justin: Yeah, there's not a lot going on in Boise and football definitely detracts from its good qualities...zing bitches!!! You could go see some third rate chucklehead at the local comedy dive, check out a hippie jam band at any corner bar, or get a blow job from some drunk burn in the alley between Main and Idaho Streets, just as long as you don't count on those fucking potatoes, they all get shipped out of state.

**Will>> I know you guys have quite a few releases out there in your four/five years as a band. can you run down your releases and maybe point out**

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**a favorite song or something significant or interesting about each release?** Mike:

Ugh, here goes:  
demo cassette,  
split w/ I ACCUSE!  
"Diagnosis:  
Delicious" EP,  
split w/ PILE  
OF MAGGOT  
INFESTED VISCERA,  
"Goatmeal" EP, split  
w/ CHAINSAW  
TO THE FACE, split  
w/ DEAD STARE,  
"Full Spectrum  
Dominance"  
cassette which

collects all of the above and more, "Show Us The Meaning Of Haste" LP. As of this writing two more recordings are in the can: split w/ SIDETRACKED and tracks for "This Comp Kills Fascists" Volume 2. Justin: I personally like how most of the releases have a life of their own. They all sound different and bring a different feel to what we're doing. We'd be here all day if I said something specific about each release, but I can say the best shit is the raw shit and our side of that DEAD STARE split sounds like pure feces!

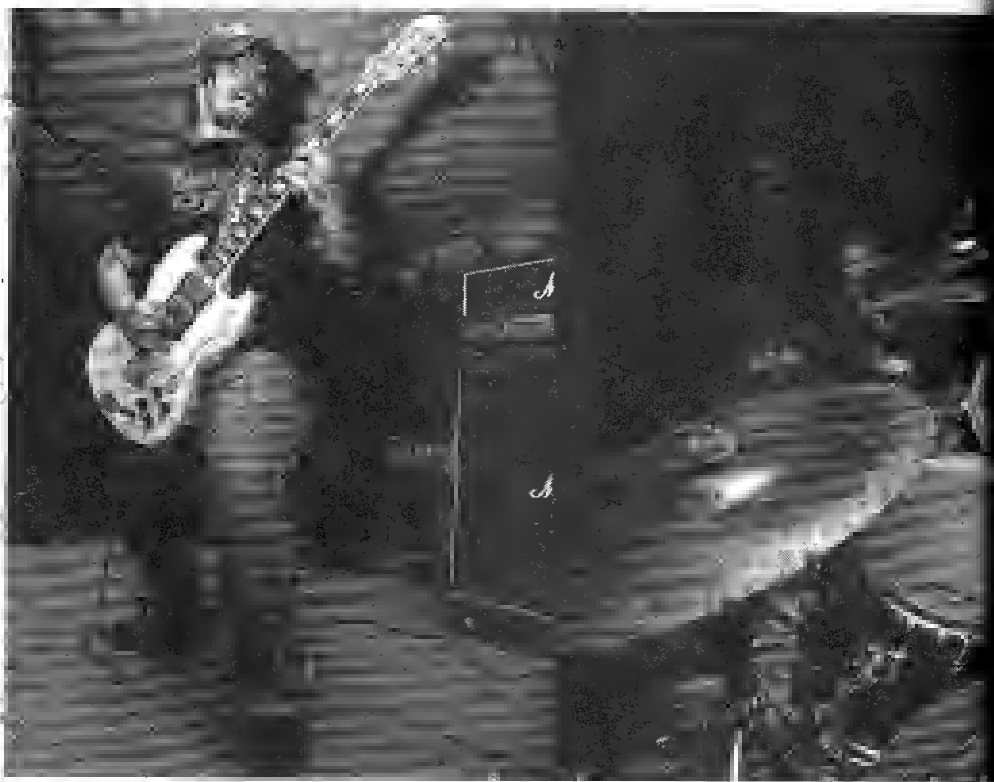
**Will>>The Dead Stare split is epic. There were problems with the test presses on that release wasn't there?** Mike: If by "epic" you mean "short" then yes it's quite epic. There was a problem getting a good test press for that one, but the pressing of our first 7" was the worst. At one point in that process we got a test and the plant had pressed side A on both sides! It took 4 tries for them to get it right. Poor Quinn from Fatalist Records, I think he put up with a lot of that shit when he



ran his label.

**Will>> Tell me more about the "This Comp Kills Fascists" Volume II. I didn't even know this was coming into existence. Any word on what bands are going to be on this one?** Mike: Of course I know what bands are involved. As we speak I've not heard any official announcement from Relapse, Deep Six, or Scott Hull (comp organizer) regarding the comp, so I will keep my mouth shut. I bet that by the time this interview is printed, there will be more info available. Also, keep in mind that 20 bands are involved, but if Scott realizes that that's too much music for one comp, he might splinter some bands off to form a third volume. So I could drop a few names, but then they might be dropped off of volume II, and I'd look like a damn fool.

**Will>> You deliver quite a different sound on Show Us The Meaning of Haste, was there some driving factor to putting together a full length with this much depth and different bridges to songs as compared to past releases which were more straight forwards blasts? Do you feel there was a different writing process as opposed to writing songs for the Goatmeal 5?** Justin: "Show Us" is a concept piece



about living with Crohn's disease, which you know is a whirlwind rollercoaster of rumbling, spasming, uncontrollable raw brutality. It's a tribute to the real survivors that beat it into suppression with pine cones and moss...like pre-hibernation bears. Mike: You could say "Show Us" was a dumping ground for songs we wrote earlier on that didn't fit with the musical concepts of our early releases. For example, "Panocide" and "Full Spectrum Dominance" were in our set lists 2.5 years and 1 year before we recorded the album, respectively, but were a little lengthy for the non-lp formats we worked with at the time. By the time we actually turned our attention towards finishing an lp, half of it was already written. In contrast, "Goatmeal" was a deliberate



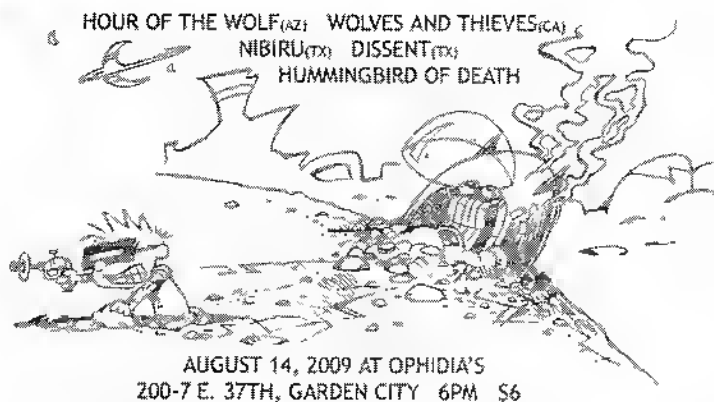
structural concept from the outset. I conceived of it originally as a 5" of 15-16 songs. I told Justin about my idea and he said 'fuck it, let's do 20 songs,' and then I said 'how about 19 on one side and 1 on the other??' We had a good laugh, and then set out to do that. It took several months to write those tiny little songs because we wanted them to feel like real songs and not something we just pulled out of our asses. I think we succeeded.

**Will>> How do you think you have progressed as a band from show to show and release**

**to release?** Mike: I think we play well when we practice. We don't practice as often as we probably should. As

for releases, I just hope we sort of push the envelope of what is possible in extreme music. We play for fun, but I have no problem aspiring to loftier goals for the band. I like to think we're trying to prove that fastcore is a legitimate genre with the same potential for creativity as any other. Which is not to say other bands aren't doing the same! Justin: What's the opposite of progress... congress!!! Yeah, pulled that one out of the vault.

**Will>> There was a contest to guess the number of songs on your discography tape. How many songs did there end up being and how many times did the winner have to listen to it to figure it out?** Mike: There are 91 songs on the tape. I don't know how



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much the dude listened to it, but he sent us a perfect track listing (minus the unreleased songs he wasn't familiar with) along with his correct guess. I was impressed. Justin: He's still lacking in awesomeness. Someone got our album cover tattooed on them, so he's gonna have to ramp it up a bit if he wants to be a true fan. Maybe he could come to every practice, showering us with gifts...that'd work.

**Will>> Please share with me some of your favorite lyrics Mike.** I feel like you put a lot of yourself into writing intelligent lyrics. Mike: Frankly, lyrics are a secondary concern for me, but when it comes time to write them I put some thought into them and try not to repeat myself. Favorite lyrics... "Carnies" springs to mind. "Invoking Jesus to build an empire on the shoulders of the faithful..." regarding evangelical leaders who seem to care more about acquiring money and power than saving lost souls. That's a good one. Also I still stand by the lyrics to "Marriage Is For Suckers" even though Brian and Justin are both married now. "Codifying one's love should not be necessary." Justin: This question isn't directed at me but since I inadvertently wrote lyrics to only one of our songs, I'll say that's the best one I wrote. We'll have another contest to see who can guess which one it was. Yay!

**Will>> I feel that in the punk scene there is not much celebrity worship as with a lot of other groups. but every now and then there are those moments... have you ever felt just beyond stoked meeting someone at a show or played with a band you never thought you'd have played with?** Mike: I don't get 'beyond stoked' necessarily, because long ago I internalized the fact that people in punk/hardcore bands, even the big ones, are just normal people like me who like to make new friends through playing music. That said, CAPITALIST CASUALTIES are one of my very favorite bands and I was really excited to do a couple shows with them. Playing with DRI would have been great, we were supposed to play with them in 2006 but then Spike Cassidy got cancer and it didn't happen. Maybe it will sometime. Justin: I enjoyed that one band that kept saying funny shit during their set. Can't remember their name now... Mike: DESTRUCTION'S END I think that was?

**Will>> You have played with some intense bands including CATHETER. IN DISGUST. WOZCZECH. and FINAL DRAFT. do any shows stand out particularly? How was it playing and hanging out with with the great people in RAMMING SPEED and CANNABIS CORPSE?** Mike: The aforementioned shows in Denver with CAP CAS stand out immediately. The two we did with FINAL DRAFT (once in LA and then 2009 Speed Trials at Gilman) were among our biggest shows to date. UNHOLY GRAVE/MAGRUDERGRIND was one of my favorite Boise shows. We've known RAMMING SPEED for a few years now, we love those guys. When they came through Boise with CANNABIS we didn't visit with them very much because I had a family emergency to attend to, but the CANNABIS dudes were very friendly. All the bands (even ours) played well that night. Justin: Every band you just named gives me a

boner.

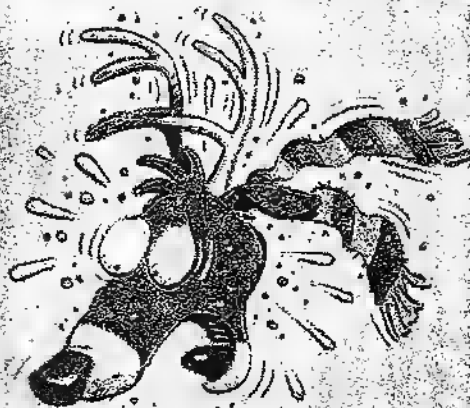
**Will>> I know you put on shows at your house including a show that raised an amazing amount of money for a friend with MS, how do people react to causes like this and do you feel like your community is supportive about causes like this?** Mike: When I have had a house capable of hosting shows, I've done so because in Boise there are very few options for all-ages jams. As I type this I am in an apartment but hope to be back in a house soon! The benefit you mentioned took place at a large bar, with \$5-10 collected per head and a shitload of raffling. When someone in our scene is faced with a bum deal and is in dire need, we've shown that we can come together to help, but I think it's important not to overdo events like these or else people will burn out. "Jesus, not another benefit" or "not another fest." Justin: Benefits raise the money to the ground.

**Will>> Tell me about your bevvy of other bands you play in. Are any of these bands comparably as serious as HOD?** Mike: It's hard to say we put any more effort into this band than any of the others, but HOD is easily the biggest band we've ever been in. Brian and I just came out of a rock/punk band called MANVILLE which released several recordings and toured around the western US. I've drummed for PILE OF MAGGOT INFESTED VISCERA since 2004. Also I drum for two long-running skate punk bands: UPINATEM and THE QUICKIES. UPINATEM dates back to 1995, but I didn't join until 2003. I joined THE QUICKIES in 2008 but they actually started in 1998. Justin: I play in P.O.M.I.V. with Mike. Brian and I are in a pop-punk band named STRINGS AND CHEMICALS but we switch instruments. I'm in the pre-production stages of re-recording the WINGS (PAUL MCCARTNEY) greatest hits album using only kazoo and xylophones. Also, I thought I'd bring up that Mike and I were previously in a band (STARSCREAM) that makes us embarrassed for the rest of our lives, or so a review said we should be. Another review said, "Man, this band sucks."

**Will>> What are future plans for HUMMINGBIRD OF DEATH?** Mike: We write songs and try to scheme ways to get out of Boise and tour (it's not easy) on a continuous basis. Concrete plans right now involve a split LP w/ TITANARUM and writing the next lp. Justin: I think we'll probably eat some food.

**Will>> Last words? I'd love it if each one of you gave a shout-out to someone you wouldn't normally think to give a shout-out to.** Mike: Tony Danza, how come you never call me????? Justin: I love you ASIMO!!! Brian: Will is super sexy!

## RAMMING SPEED THE ADVERSIVES (MA) HUMMINGBIRD OF DEATH



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